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ABSTRACT

A recent analysis of on-site college evaluation reports from state evaluation teams shows that colleges have become more sophisticated in developing their own self-study reports and that the teams conducting the reviews have become more professional. Many positive qualitative and quantitative changes in the teacher training programs have been rendered as a result of the state program approval process. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) offers an additional accreditation source. This accreditation differs from the state approval process in that it uses one set of standards for all secondary teacher preparation programs, and these programs are either approved or disapproved in aggregate. NCATE teams are quite small and do not contain a specialist for each program being evaluated. Recently NCATE has been reexamining its program approval process, and a proposal has been made to concentrate review on general and professional education rather than on specific teaching fields. Some state officials question the need for NCATE's assessment of program aspects that have already been evaluated by state teams. (DG)

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QUALITY CONTROL OF TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS THROUGH THE PROGRAM APPROVAL PROCESS

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QUALITY CONTROL OF TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS
THROUGH THE PROGRAM APPROVAL PROCESS

In the past twenty-five years there has been a remarkable change in the process by which states approve teacher education programs leading to certification. In the Fifties it was quite common for colleges to consult the list of state certification regulations, to develop a set of college course titles which matched these requirements, to send the list to the state department of education, and to obtain instant approval. In that period there was, generally speaking, no Office of Teacher Education in the state department of education, little or no teacher education staff, few state standards for the approval of teacher preparation, and no process for on-site evaluation of these programs.

In recent years states have recognized their very important responsibilities for assuring to the public that the people they permit to teach in the state's schools have the kinds of preparation they expect in a beginning teacher. B. O. Smith has pointed out that

> this control over the process of teaching and institutions preparing its personnel.../is/...well established in both custom and law and widely accepted by lawmakers, courts, educators and citizens. It is the pervasive--if not too well understood--reality of education as it is organized and operated in this country. Lay state boards have responsibility both for the schools which deliver education opportunity and for the teaching profession which provides education services within them. At their discretion they may delegate more or less of their responsibility to local school systems, to the teaching profession and to the colleges and universities. In so doing, however, they do not give up either their rights or their responsibilities.[1]

It is a well-established principle of law that education is a state function, and there are many examples of state boards of education using

[1] B. O. Smith, A Design for a School of Pedagogy, Washington, D. C.: U. S. Department of Education, 1980.

their authority to correct matters which concern them. Typical, recent examples of these concerns can be seen in declining test scores, conditions in the schools, and more recently, teaching and the teacher preparation programs.

Let me develop for you how the present state program approval process came to be.

THE STANDARDS

In the Fifties, the U. S. Office of Education authorized the development of what was known as Bulletin 351 which was the first set of state program approval standards formulated with the cooperation of fifty professional societies and organizations. Through the past thirty years these standards have been almost constantly revised and improved by the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) to the place where we have a full complement of standards today entitled Standards for State Approval of Teacher Education (1983 Edition).[1]

These standards address such concerns as the organization and administration of student admission requirements, retention standards, exit requirements, and follow-up policies, as well as standards in general education, professional education, and separate standards for each of twenty-seven different teaching fields. NASDTEC engages in a constant process of revising and improving these standards through the involvement of the pertinent professional organizations and state department of education specialists.

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[1] National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification, Standards for State Approval of Teacher Education (1983 Edition) (Salt Lake City, Utah: the Association, 1983).

The standards are written in program terms, rather than in terms of a set number of courses or credits. This makes it possible for colleges to have considerable latitude in designing their programs and still provide for the needs of the beginning teacher. This point is often not understood by those who take great sport in criticizing what they would like to believe is a strict set of course requirements for state approval of teacher education programs. In fact, many states actually encourage colleges to design programs which meet standards but which deviate from traditional state certification credit count regulations.

THE PROCESS OF EVALUATION

I have explained the evaluation process which existed thirty years ago, but the process is quite different today. In the present process, a college prepares a self-study report which addresses the various standards, including the standards for the individual teaching fields. A team of professionals, mutually agreed upon by the college and the state department of education, arrives on campus for an extended visit to examine the individual programs. This is an important point, for the philosophy here is that a generalist cannot adequately evaluate all the secondary teacher preparation programs. It takes a specialist with a specific set of standards to do the job adequately.

After the evaluation team has conducted its on-site evaluation, it writes a report which addresses every standard for every program, and the decisions concerning each program are rendered by the state board of education or the state superintendent of schools.

THE STATE DEPARTMENT STAFF IN TEACHER EDUCATION

With the development of this process and these standards has also come a very important improvement in the staff of state departments of education which in recent time possess credentials equivalent to those found in the best college teacher preparation faculties.

With the appropriate backgrounds, including doctoral degrees and experience in public schools and colleges, these people can assist colleges in the design of their programs, provide information about administrative policies such as admissions requirements, and serve as a resource to the various members of an evaluation team. Many college teacher education programs are poorly funded and their faculties appreciate the consultant work which can be done by a well-qualified state department of education specialist in teacher education.

CERTIFICATION IN GENERAL

A recent national report has called teacher certification "a mess."[1] If one were to expect teacher certification to be a simple-minded process by which any college graduate could teach any class in the public schools, that person would fail to recognize the tremendous wealth of recent research on effective schools and effective classrooms which has grown by leaps and bounds in recent years. If we have learned anything from these studies, it is that teaching requires a complex set of skills which are contextual, for their appropriate application varies from situation to situation.

With the need to address the various teaching roles, states have generally studied these roles carefully and tailored the requirements to

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[1] C. Emily Feistritzer, The Making of a Teacher: A Report on Teacher Education and Certification (Washington: National Center for Education Information, 1984).

the specific teaching tasks. It would be silly to say that a kindergarten teacher's preparation should be the same as a high school chemistry teacher's--either in terms of content or professional teaching skill.

With education being a state function, it logically follows that each state has devised its own requirements for certificates based on the particular concerns of each state; however, there is a remarkable similarity among the various states. While there may be a few isolated cases of proliferation of certification categories, states have generally designed their requirements to be reasonable and yet to get quality people in their classrooms.

THE RECIPROCITY SYSTEM

For more than twenty-five years NASDTEC has been struggling with the problem of helping teachers move across state lines with the least amount of difficulty.

The Northeast States entered into an informal agreement in the Fifties to accept elementary teachers prepared in any of the other ten states in the region. Various systems have been devised over the years, but the first true national reciprocity system was developed as a result of the Interstate Certification Project. Many people owe a great deal to Dr. Helen Hartle from New York State who traveled all over this country in her pioneering effort to convince state legislatures and state superintendents of schools that they should develop a system which would provide for true reciprocity and to make the certification of teachers across state lines easier, more manageable, and more accessible.

The process provides for each participating state to pass the same enabling legislation, thus creating a compact. This legislation authorizes

the state superintendent of schools to enter into a contract with any other state superintendent of schools to grant a certificate in the receiving state. This certificate is an initial teaching certificate which is given even if the teacher does not meet the credit count requirements of the receiving state, so long as the teacher completed a state approved program in the sending state. This system also provides for ~~the~~ experienced teachers, under the appropriate circumstances, to take their certificates on which they have taught in one state and receive a comparable certificate in one of the participating states. (See attached list.)

At the present time, 37 states have passed the enabling legislation which would make it possible for a person completing one of our Maryland State Department of Education approved programs to be granted a certificate which is comparable to our beginning teaching certificate in another state. Although we have this large reciprocity program, there still are those individuals who have difficulty in obtaining certificates in other states, but they are usually people who have not completed an approved program in one of the participating states. Therefore, many states have seen the need to retain the process of credit count to make it possible for those who have not completed an approved program to obtain a certificate in their new states.

The reciprocity system was first implemented in 1969, and the states have just completed the signing of the fourth cycle of five-year contracts through the Interstate Certification Contract Administrators Association.

WHAT IS THE QUALITY OF STATE-APPROVED PROGRAMS?

I would like to call your attention to a recent analysis of ten years of college evaluation reports resulting from the state evaluation teams

which examined 224 undergraduate programs and nearly 50 graduate education programs. The first cycle of these evaluations was conducted from 1971 to 1976 and the second cycle from 1976 to 1981. This report clearly shows the growth of the process of state evaluation of teacher preparation programs, the sophistication of the colleges in developing their self-study reports, and the professionalism of the teams which conducted the on-campus reviews. During the second cycle mentioned above, forty-four programs received full five-year approvals and a number of programs actually received no approvals at all.

The changes which occurred during the ten-year period are too numerous to mention, but a few will illustrate the accomplishments:

- seventy-five percent of the programs showed an increase in the number of field experiences provided since the initial evaluations.
- fifty-five percent of the evaluation reports noted an increase in the variety of early field experiences provided in the professional education curriculum since the initial evaluation visits.
- sixty-five percent of the institutions had increased the length of the student teaching practicum.

To verify the findings of the study, the investigator also interviewed deans and directors of the college teacher preparation programs examined to gain their perceptions of the changes which had occurred in their teacher education programs during this ten-year period.

What were the major changes cited by the deans? They were:

- restructured teacher education programs
- courses were added to programs and/or emphasis shifted in courses to meet the NASDTEC standards

. increased field experiences through the professional program

. more active involvement of widely-represented advisory committees in teacher education

. lengthened student teaching practicum

. more specific criteria for admission to teacher education which was often expanded beyond grade point average

. more structured general education component

. increased staff, facilities, and other resources for teacher education

And how did the colleges feel about the state department of education and its staff? The report says "They generally applauded the fairness of the program approval process and the human relations skills of the Teacher Education and Certification Branch."

This report concludes by stating that this decade of on-site evaluations had brought changes in both the quality and quantity of experiences in professional education programs.

There are those individuals who will look at these changes and, because they do not understand the complex nature of being a teacher and the doubly difficult task of preparing a competent beginning teacher in a four-year program, will fail to recognize the significant achievements these evaluations have brought about.[1]

A recent follow-up study by a major teacher preparation institution asked principals and supervisors of first year graduates of approved programs to rate these beginning teachers in terms of their classroom effectiveness

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[1] Robby H. Champion, Impact of the Program Approval Process in Maryland: Summary and Analysis of On-Site Teacher Education Program Evaluations--1971-1981 (Baltimore, Maryland: The Maryland State Department of Education, 1982).

according to certain specific categories. The study's major purpose was to obtain information about the quality of these beginning teacher's teacher education experiences. Fifty-one first-year teachers and their supervisors participated in the study. Supervisors and principals were asked to rate these teachers on ten specific skills which were goals of the teacher preparation program, and these items were rated on a five point scale, with five being "outstanding," 2.5 being "average" and zero being non-existent. How did the supervisors rate the graduates of these approved programs in comparison with other teachers they had supervised?

The average across all ten goals was 3.7, slightly below a 4 which had been labeled "highly competent."[1] This accomplishment is extremely positive and encouraging in light of the recent criticism of teacher preparation programs.

THE NCATE PROCESS

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is a body which was created by six national professional education organizations in 1951-1952. Since 1954 NCATE has accredited college teacher education programs across the country, and the recent Feistritzer report indicated

> NCATE accredited 527 institutions preparing teachers in 1983.... Seventy-eight percent of the public colleges and universities training teachers reported having NCATE accreditation, whereas only a little over one-third of the private ones did. Almost eighty percent of the institutions with enrollments in excess of ten thousand are accredited by NCATE compared with only 20 percent of the colleges enrolling fewer than one thousand students.[2]

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[1] Joseph L. McCaleb, "An Investigation of On-The-Job Performance of First-Year Teachers Who Are Graduates from the University of Maryland, College Park from December 1982 to August 1983" (College of Education, University of Maryland, 1984).

[2] C. Emily Feistritzer, The Making of a Teacher: A Report on Teacher Education and Certification (Washington: National Center for Education Information, 1984).

It is difficult to determine the significance of these numbers for NCATE is a voluntary organization, and teacher education institutions are not required to seek their approval.

Over the years there have been many discussions and criticisms of NCATE with groups asking such questions as "How can a Washington based council with a small staff adequately conduct so many evaluations all over the country?" Also, there have been many questions about the constituent organizations and control of NCATE.

Let us look at three important aspects of the NCATE evaluation process: (1) the standards, (2) the composition of the teams, and (3) the resulting approvals.

NCATE developed a process which did not apply program specific standards in its review. That is, a single set of standards has been used for the in-depth analysis of the academic content of all the teaching fields leading to certification. For example, the teaching fields of English and art are quite different and to apply one set of non-specific standards to both programs would be an impossible task for an evaluator. To assure that these programs contain the appropriate content for a prospective teacher requires program specific standards.

Let me take the example one step further. The standards for an English program should insure the study of a balanced program of literature and language. The latter is often missing from a teacher's preparation. However, with specific program standards, it can be assured that the prospective English teacher will receive preparation in the areas of linguistics, grammar, composition, and the structure of the English language. The same kind of illustration could be given for the prospective art teacher.

The approach which NCATE has traditionally used has been quite different from the state approval process which has specific program standards for each secondary teaching field. In this program specific process, each program must stand alone in terms of meeting standards; however, each program must also meet the general and professional education requirements which are common to all teacher education programs in the institution.

Both the state approval process and the NCATE approach provide for an in-depth evaluation of general education and professional education.

Recently NCATE has been in the process of reexamining its program approval process and a proposal has been made for NCATE to discontinue the evaluation of specific teaching fields and to concentrate on the review of general education and professional education. However, there are those state officials who have questioned why there is a need for NCATE to examine these aspects of teacher education programs when they have previously been thoroughly evaluated by state teams.

One of the important points to be made about any evaluation is the willingness of the team and the approval agency to have the strength of character to address very difficult issues with the officials in the institution when standards are not met. It is indeed unfortunate when an NCATE team has approved every standard for every program in an institution when the state would not give any approval to a program in that institution.

Since NCATE has used one set of standards for all secondary teacher preparation programs, teams have been usually quite small and one team member may be required to evaluate the art, the music, the social studies, and other teacher preparation programs. This, of course, would not happen in the state approval process which I have described previously, for these teams contain at least one specialist for each program being evaluated.

It is a serious flaw in program approval when an NCATE team has only one evaluator to examine all aspects of the professional education component. We would all agree that a classroom teacher who has had no experience in a college teacher education program and has had no prior experience serving on a college evaluation team should not serve in this role. However, it has happened.

Since all secondary teacher preparation programs are approved by NCATE in the aggregate, a decision must be made about whether approval will be given when there are many fine programs and one or two weak ones. This, of course, would not happen in our state approval model for each program is approved individually.

This process of approving "programs in the aggregate" becomes very serious when we recognize that many years ago some states placed in their certification regulations the provision that they would grant a certificate to any person who completed an NCATE approved program. The problem for state departments of education in issuing these certificates is that they may be issuing a certificate to a person who completed a program which was very weak. The state department would not know the person completed a substandard program, for the weak programs are masked when blanket approvals are given to excellent and poor programs together.

While these concerns are not news to the NCATE office, the problems are not solved. We recognize that there is an extensive study going on which will make proposals about how these problems can be corrected.

THE RISE OF TESTING AND PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

At the present time, many states grant a certificate to a person who has either completed the courses or the program in their field; however,

there is a significant change in the air. Many states are adding two requirements to the long-standing one of the completion of a state-approved college teacher preparation program. These are knowledge tests and the demonstration of effective teaching on the job. In these states, all three of these basic requirements must be met for full certification.

A recent report by J. T. Sandefur[1] shows that 30 states now have some kind of knowledge test which is a requirement for certification, and thirteen states require demonstration of successful teaching during their first few years on the job. Also, 25 other states report that they are planning for this requirement.

With these developments, the completion of an approved program becomes only a part of the total certification process.

THE RESULTS

We who administer the approval process in the states believe that effective programs of preparation have resulted from the state program approval process. These evaluations have raised the level of professionalism, and the few studies which we have demonstrate that teachers who complete these programs are receiving fine ratings by their school supervisors and principals during their first years of teaching.

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[1] J. T. Sandefur, "Competency Assessment in Teacher Education: A Compilation of State Activity 1980-83" (Western Kentucky University).

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INTERSTATE CERTIFICATION CONTRACT
ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES
as of June, 1984

State [1]	Contact [2]	Contract Administrators Assoc. Representative	CAA Alternate
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Alaska	(To be announced)	No Contract	
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Connecticut		Leonard Garber	Patricia Scully Belair
Delaware		Ervin Marsh	William W. Barkley
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[1] States have passed enabling legislation
[2] State Superintendents have not yet signed contracts